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By the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Proposal

Education for Gainful Enrichment (EDGE)

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Office of Public Instruction
Adult Basic and Literacy Education Program
Division of Career and Technical Education
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I. Introduction

A. Purpose of the Project

The Education for Gainful Enrichment (EDGE) program is designed to assist local Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) providers to specifically address the basic educational needs of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligible population. Through this project, services will be provided to the targeted eligible population addressing the basic education needs of participants in order to work toward achieving:

1. Increased basic education skills giving priority to math and reading and/or
2. The secondary equivalency (GED.)

TANF funds for the EDGE project are intended to help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and illiteracy, while building secure and stable families, by improving educational outcomes for low income families. The purpose of the EDGE project will be to expand current ABLE services to provide specific and targeted adult basic education services for TANF eligible adults out of school, 16 years of age or older, with a need to increase academic skills and proficiency. The targeted priority population will be TANF recipients assessed with the TABE and scoring at the Intermediate ABE level (typically grade level equivalency of 5.0 to 8.9)

Funding for EDGE projects will be awarded competitively through a Request for Proposal (RFP). Individual award amounts will depend upon a number of factors, including geographic distribution, the number of eligible TANF participants in the region, and targeted number to serve and potential for outreach to rural satellite sites.

The number of TANF adult recipients (at enrollment) that will be served by the EDGE project will be an addition to the adults currently participating in ABLE programs or an added service to those enrolled. Services will be over and above those available through publicly funded ABLE. Priority

consideration for grantees will be given to proposals that have the highest number of TANF recipients proportionate to the service area population, and the range of services provided by the local service provider, including necessary supportive services.

Grantee performance will be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. Participant attendance as agreed to by the participant, the WoRC case manager and the ABLE program.
2. Educational functional gains of the participant
3. Achievement of the GED.

It is anticipated that up to three grants may be awarded. The period of a grant shall be for fifteen months. Successful applicants will receive funding for the 15-month grant period, which is expected to begin in April 2006 and conclude June 30, 2007.

Grant funds may not be used to supplant other federal, state or locally funded programs.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction administers a full range of State and federally funded adult education and family literacy programs for out-of-school youth and adults. The OPI will oversee the implementation of the grant(s) resulting from this RFP. ABLE program staff will also maintain contact with selected grantees and monitor performance of the grant.

EDGE Program Design

Applicants will be required to design their program in partnership with OPA/WoRC program guidelines to ensure that EDGE supports local TANF participation goals, individual employment plans, and does not conflict with mandated work requirements. Grantees will collect data using the MTSIMS program. The OPI requests that the Department of Public Health and

Human Services (DPHHS) provide guidance on specific data and reporting information required of the grant.

The OPI will provide to the DPHHS the following data on program participation and outcomes:

- Number served
- Number completing the GED
- Number showing an Educational Functioning Level increase
- Number and type of assessments completed
- Number of activity hours scheduled
- Number of activity hours attended
- Other measurements as decided at a later point

EDGE Program Features

The focus of the EDGE project is to provide basic education and literacy skills instruction and service to TANF participants who have been assessed at the Intermediate ABE level (GLE 5.0-8.9) that will lead to increased academic skill and possible include GED completion. The following section describes the steps to be used in reaching this goal.

Participant Selection

TANF adult recipients (16 years of age and older and not enrolled in secondary education) may be eligible for the EDGE project. All participants will have an increase in their educational functioning level as a goal. The following criteria will be considered for enrollment in EDGE:

- a) Assessment scores – TABE assessment in reading at the Intermediate ABE level (GLE 8.0 or lower)
- b) Commitment – participant must sign an agreement committing to attendance and goals of EDGE, including the hours of participation.
- c) Recommendation and support by the WoRC case manager and the agreement of the adult education staff

1. Educational Enrichment Plan

For each EDGE participant, providers must develop an Educational Enrichment Plan that identifies the basic academic skills needed for the participant's success in the program.

At a minimum, the Educational Enrichment Plan should:

- Be designed in using the assessment results in conjunction with the participant, the WoRC case manager and the ABLE program. The plan will include specific, reasonable, achievable and measurable goals.
- Screening results from PowerPath
- Include an assessment of individual academic skill with a record of test results of the participant's educational level at program start and program conclusion.
- Address the educational barriers that may prevent the participant from successfully participating in EDGE and develop a set of educational strategies that may help the participant to overcome the barriers,
- Contain measurable and verifiable long and short-term goals for participation.
- Specify a timeframe for completing program components and meeting goals appropriate to the individual.

2. Educational Instruction

Adult education improves the educational levels of adults and the economic self-sufficiency of families by empowering participants to set and meet goals, improve their reading, math, and English language skills, and improve their chances for meaningful employability. It includes Adult Basic Education (ABLE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and High School Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation.

Instruction may be provided through several methods, including:

- Classroom settings: Instruction in the classroom.
- One-on-one tutoring: The participant meets with a literacy tutor.

Budget

The 2005 Montana legislature has appropriated \$250,000 for the biennium to be used for adult basic education services with priority funding given to the geographic areas that have the highest percentage of their population enrolled in the TANF program. The funding is specifically designated to support the provision of adult basic education services designed to meet the specific needs of TANF participants.

The OPI will allocate the funds per year as follows:

Local grants will be awarded 85% of the appropriated amount or for the biennium. It is anticipated that up to three awards will be made, amounts to be determined by the scope of the proposal and the outcomes projected.

The OPI will maintain 15% or \$18,750 of the funds per year to support administrative functions of the project.

Note:

As discussed, the funds for this project will be distributed to local grantees, and other funds will be identified to co-sponsor for a statewide collaborative training for ABLE, OPA/WoRC, Job Service and other providers to enhance and improve services to low-income families and individuals in poverty.